



Director of
Intelligence

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TURKEY: Political Assessment

The US Embassy in Ankara believes Prime Minister Ecevit's left-of-center government, despite its slumping popularity, has a good chance of remaining in power until the October senatorial election, barring a further breakdown in the economy or in public order.

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The Embassy comments that Ecevit recently demonstrated his parliamentary strength by winning crucial budget and martial law extension votes. His troubled legislative majority seems inclined to stick together out of fear that an early election would cause the government to fall.

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The major opposition Justice Party, unsuccessful so far in capitalizing on the infighting, is now preparing for the October election when one-third of the senate seats will be contested. According to the Embassy, as long as Ecevit can keep his supporters in line, no combination of opposition parties or deputies can unseat him. Moreover, some in the Justice Party are leery of coalitions with competing conservative parties.

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Many Turks, including the President, seem to favor a "national" government of moderate politicians, or a "grand coalition" of both major parties minus their present leaders, as a means of confronting the country's problems. Past "above-parties" governments in Turkey have proven ineffective, and neither Ecevit nor Justice Party leader Demirel will readily relinquish his leadership. President Koruturk, meanwhile, seems unwilling to use pressure to produce greater party cooperation.

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The Embassy believes that the military, though disinclined to become involved in politics, might intervene if the economy or public order deteriorate rapidly, or if Kurdish separatist activity resumes. At a minimum, the military might insist on a "above-parties" government or call for new elections. If compelled to take control, the military might seek to make some constitutional revisions to end the string of weak coalition governments. Such intervention would probably entail a temporary loss of some freedoms, but the Embassy believes the military would be motivated by a desire to reform, not to discard, Turkish democracy.

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SPAIN: Local Elections

The municipal elections being held today have evoked scant public interest in light of Prime Minister Suarez' recent victory in the parliamentary election. The parties nevertheless have an important stake in them. The first democratic local elections in Spain in nearly 50 years will permit the parties to establish themselves at the grass-roots level.

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These elections are genuine contests between Suarez' Union of the Democratic Center on the right and the Socialists and Communists on the left, and within the left between the Socialists and the Communists. In several provinces, the contest is between regional parties and national groupings.

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Suarez' party is likely to win a majority of the municipal councilorships, mayoralties, and provincial council seats. His party is strongest in the smaller towns, and the electoral law favors his party in these contests. The more consequential races are in the large urban areas, where the left is strongest and where it stands a good chance of securing a foothold.

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The Socialists hope to carry the large cities despite their disappointing showing in the national election last month, but in many important contests no party is likely to gain a clear majority. Because the municipal councils elect the mayors and provincial councilmen from their members, there will be considerable maneuvering, particularly between Socialists and Communists. The Socialists have said they would not enter into a coalition with the Communists on the national level, but the two parties are likely to reach some agreements to deny mayoralties and provincial council seats to Suarez' party. This will probably give the Communists a somewhat more important role in some city governments than their vote totals would warrant.

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In the troubled Basque region, the moderate Basque Nationalist Party, which has recently become more strident in support of autonomy, stands a good chance of beating the national parties. Its large vote, combined with probable gains by Basque radicals, will further complicate the government's task of negotiating an autonomy statute for the region.

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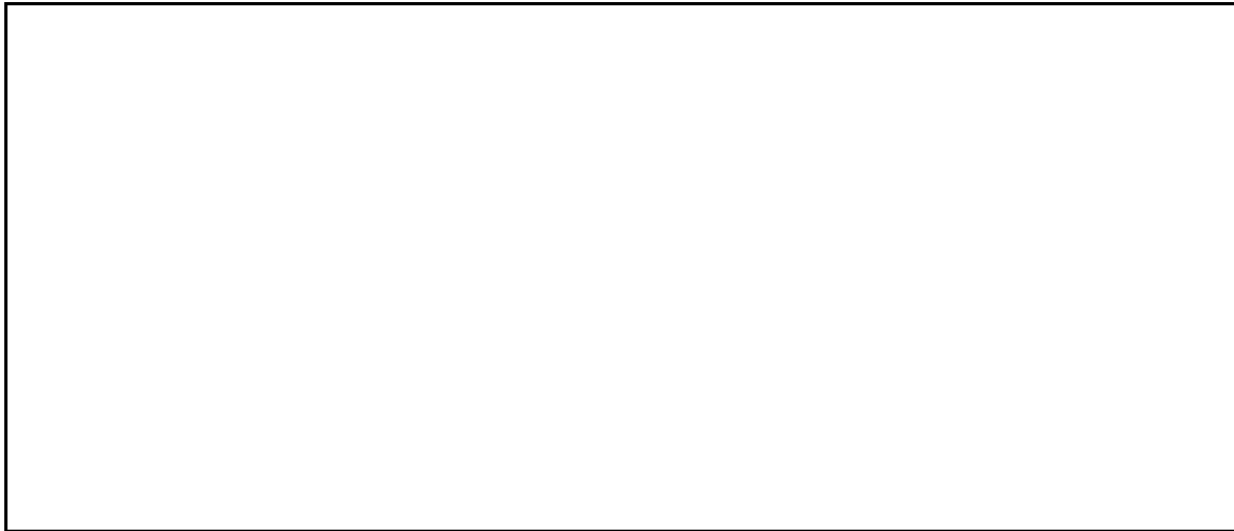
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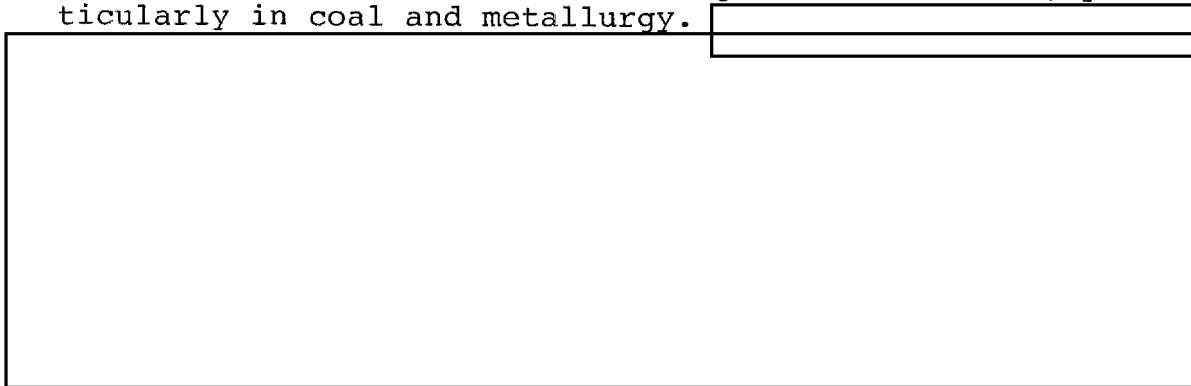
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USSR: Industrial Production Languishes

Soviet press reports suggest that the industrial sector's lackluster performance during the last three months of 1978 has continued through the first quarter of this year. Abnormally severe winter weather has been partly responsible for holding down energy production, increasing demand for heating fuels, tying up transportation, and slowing distribution of industrial raw materials and semifinished products. The interruption of Iranian gas deliveries also heightened the strain on energy supplies. Oil production fell short of plan at several locations and inadequate supplies of drill pipe and casing impeded drilling operations in Tyumen Oblast. Chronic absenteeism in many factories and persistent delays in new factory starts are contributing to the slowdown, particularly in coal and metallurgy.

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